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THE LATE GEORGE INNES ON THE NUDE IN ART.

(Concluded.)

"The painter tells his story with the pathos of his color, with the delicacies of his chiaroscuro, with the suggestions of his form. These are elements which the artist perceives in Nature, and which are superior to literary art, because they create it. For of what value is a mere bald enumeration of the things that one sees? That which inspires with a human sympathy what is told, making appeal from man to man, is a subtle essence which exists in all things of the material world, and which addresses eloquently, through the senses, the human consciousness, creating an intellectual perception of niceties of relation, of peculiarities of condition, and constituting an atmosphere about the bald detail of facts. These elements the artistic mind is continually engaged in endeavoring to give men sensuous apprehension of, and thus to speak to them of that which is unseen. It therefore is not precise to say that the story is not an artistic quality of a work of art; for the two are so intimately connected that they are as the soul and body in the man, which form one personality. The reason why the artist is often induced to say that the story is nothing, is because he unconsciously perceives the possibility of the creative spirit's making something out of nothing.

"The evils of sensuality are not the greatest evils among men, great though they be. If we believe that the true happiness of man consists in his spiritual elevation, we must believe that what tends only to the degradation of the *propria persona* of the individual is not the greatest evil; because from that he may arise to acknowledge his own weakness. If this be so, the greatest evil among men is that which puts man in direct antagonism to noble ideas.

"The generally received opinion that art originated in the love of imitation is an error analogous to that great one which attributes the origin of religion to the external observation of Nature merely. Art really originated in the desire to communicate intelligence, this desire expressing itself in the representation of natural forms. That this is the true view is evident from the fact that among primitive people these representations of natural forms were and are produced not with the aim to make them as like the originals as possible, but to impart some information. Take, for example, the American Indians. With them a carelessly-drawn circle serves to represent a man's head; a carelessly-drawn oval, his body: four simple strokes, his arms and legs. In all primitive representations of natural forms we shall find the same indifference to likeness or portraiture. The aesthetic love of form was a new and distinct development of the sympathetic life of man. Previous to this love, was the intellectual principle, which was the first outgrowth of man's sympathetic life and which expanded with the expression of ideas by forms, and the expression of ideas by sounds. These ideas were ideas of consciousness—the soul expressed and re-expressed what it was conscious of—and they acted as moral forces. Among the Egyptians, the earliest historic race, these ideas regulated the love of form by certain prescribed rules that originated, doubtless, in religious scruples. Among the Greeks, these ideas were free from the influence of religious scruples, but were subjected to the influence of the Hellenic conception of the heroism of the soul in its combat with matter. This conception, acting as a moral force, restrained the charms of the senses, and represented natural forms so as to convey ideas of the heroic. As the Greek mind became degraded, the ideal hero and the beauty of virtue ceased to be controlling forces. The worship of individual forms, the decline of art. Christian art, like the founder of Christianity, was born in a manger. Unlike the art of primitive peoples, it was produced by no intellectual desire, nor by the love of Nature in any imitative sense. It grew from a sympathy for the sufferings of humanity. Unlike the art of Greece, it was inspired, not by the heroism that combats opposing matter, but by the divine resigna-

tion that submits to it. It grew and changed, however, as the ideas of the founder of Christianity were profaned by the love of power; and, gradually clothing itself in the graces and beauty of the Greek mind, it received the impress of natural reality. This change continued until, in Holland, we find art imitating natural objects more closely than ever before or since. Lower than this, art could not go. Great and many were the attempts, both in the world of thought and in the world of art, to get back to the early Christian source of inspiration—sympathy for human suffering, love for one's fellow man. But the forms once vital were now dead. The time of a new epoch had come—the epoch of the scientific mind, which began in the last century, and is still in progress. The development of this scientific mind is a reaction against the assumptions of ecclesiastical dogmatism. But love for one's fellow men has grown for eighteen centuries, and is strong. The weaker love, born of speculative thought, must yield to it. Science is unable to conceive of spirit; it ignores the reality of the unseen; and the tendency of art has been to follow in the train of science, for art is but the concrete expression of the era in which it is formed.

"The doctrine called pre-Raphaelitism was a true outgrowth of the scientific tendency of the new age. It was false as a philosophy, though necessary as a reactionary force. It carried the love of imitation into irrational conditions. Objects were painted without regard to their distances; and in England, where it took its strongest hold, the most frightful conglomerations were produced under the assumption of absolute accuracy. Science gives no true image of humanity. Its man is a machine, reasoned from sensation. The true end of art is not to imitate a fixed material condition, but to represent a living motion. The intelligence to be conveyed by it is not of an outer fact, but of an inner life. Therefore, the knowledge of how to get the mastery of sensuous impressions is the kind of knowledge the painter needs. The pre-Raphaelite worker, who would enter into the highest sphere of art, must first learn to see that his work of imitation has no life in it; that all attempts at imitation are puerile. Art requires the knowledge of principles. You must suggest to me reality—you can never show me reality.

"Impressionism has become a watchword, and represents the opposite extreme to pre-Raphaelitism. It arises from the same skeptical scientific tendency to ignore the reality of the unseen. The mistake in each case is the same, namely, that the material is real. It was supposed by the founders of the impressionist school that the aesthetic sense could be satisfied by what the eye is impressed with. The Paris impressionists a few years ago had so nearly succeeded in expressing their idea of truth, that only flat surfaces, the bounds of which represented at some points defined forms, appeared on their canvases. Everything was flat. Science now teaches that it is the inexperienced eye that sees only surfaces; and the efforts of Magnan and others to reduce their aesthetic culture to zero was wonderfully attained. Since their day the aim of the impressionist has been to be governed more by feeling.

"Art is a representation of life in the form of a new and distinct potency. The greatness of art is not in the display of knowledge, or in material accuracy, but in the distinctness with which it conveys the impression of a personal vital force, that acts spontaneously, without fear or hesitation. The results of intellectual caution are antagonistic to the human element, and are also scientifically incorrect. This vital, creative force does not act according to law. It creates law while in the process of expansion. Accordingly, a man of science will often discover in a work of art principles of which the artist was wholly unconscious. Much has been said of the comparative difficulties of various branches of art. But difficulties have nothing to do with the matter. 'Eat what thy soul loveth.' The real difficulty is in bringing the intellect to submit to the fact of the indefinable—that which hides itself that we may see it. The intellect naturally desires to define everything. Art is a subtle essence. It is not a thing of surfaces, but a moving spirit, harmonizing the discordant by rejecting the excess of the sensuous cravings of the intellect."



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